

**Remarks made by
EUCOM Commander in Chief
General Joseph W. Ralston**

Secretary and Mrs. Cohen, General and Mrs. Shelton, General and Mrs. Clark, President Straub, Minister Schäuble (Shoy-ble), General and Mrs. Jones, General Robertson, Admiral and Mrs. Abbot, Lord Mayor Doctor Schuster (Shoo-ster), Professor Doctor Rommel, Component and Sub-unified Commanders, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, fellow soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, and coast guardsmen of European Command.

Dede and I want to thank each of you for being here to share in this time-honored military tradition ... as we accept the privilege of this command ... with its proud heritage and its warfighting focus.

Secretary Cohen and Janet, we are particularly grateful that you could be here to participate in this ceremony.

General Clark, you and Gert have left Dede and me an organization with magnificent people and a great mission ... and it will be our pleasure and honor to steward this treasure.

Thank you for the years of service you've given this Command and our Armed Forces ... both of you have earned the gratitude and esteem of our Nation and of free peoples everywhere ... and Dede and I wish you every happiness.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is especially gratifying to be a part of a command with such a proud heritage.

Over the life of this command, whenever the nation called the dedicated and talented men and women of EUCOM ... and their families ... answered ... providing swift and decisive military power ... when and where it was needed most.

Now, to be a part of such a distinguished warfighting command is a thrill for both Dede and me.

General Shelton ... I am especially pleased to have this opportunity to continue to work with you and Carolyn once again.

I am committed to the readiness of our soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines to carry out whatever mission you pass to us from our National Command Authorities.

We also are committed to improving the quality of life for our troops and their families.

There is no other place I'd rather be than right here ... serving our nation at the tip of the spear.

I will do everything I can to ensure EUCOM continues to support the community of free, stable, and prosperous nations.

Thank you.